



Dear Friend,

Snow glistens under sunny skies on a February morning over halfway between the Winter Solstice and the coming Vernal Equinox. Days are growing longer, and signs of Spring are everywhere in the Hocking River Valley. Sap flows up the Maples as Eastern Bluebirds and Northern Cardinals sing their mating calls. Though the cold Winter we've experienced here is the result of melting polar ice caps and increasing climate instability, I am grateful for the frozen ground and the opportunity to pause and lean into the unquenchable resilience of our shared existence. May we all feel grounded and connected as we enter this season of rebirth and growth, finding beauty in the life around us and promise in that which we create together.

With gratitude and hope,

Jo

Southeast Ohio Regional Director

Regional Events

Thursday, February 26: | [Winter Wildlife Series: Pollinators & Their Habitats](#) | Hocking Soil & Water Conservation District (148 N. Homer Ave. Logan 43138) | 5:30 PM

Saturday, February 28: | [Prescribed Burn Prep Day](#) | Chauncey-Dover Trailhead Park (8433 W Bailey Rd, Millfield 45761) | 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Saturday, March 7: | [OEC In Your Area](#) | Solid Ground Farm (13262 Liars Corner Rd. Millfield 45761) | 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Tuesday, March 10: | [Green Lunch Series: Forests That Work](#) | Athens Public Library (30 Home St. Athens 45701) | 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Thursday, March 12: | [Winter Wildlife Series: Pollinators & Their Habitats](#) | Hocking Soil & Water Conservation District (148 N. Homer Ave. Logan 43138) | 5:30 PM

Friday, March 20: | [Southeast Ohio Farm to School Conference](#) | The Lodge at Hocking College (15770 Ohio 690 Nelsonville 45764) | 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Saturday, March 28: | [Hocking Hills Pollinator Gardening Symposium](#) | Logan Theater (88 E Main St. Logan 43138) | 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Sunday, March 29: | [Spring Inoculation Workshop with Soulshine Acres](#) | Soulshine Acres (10550 Salem Rd. Athens 45701) | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Saturday, April 11: | [Words in the Hills: Youth Retreat](#) | Solid Ground Farm (13262 Liars Corner Rd. Millfield 45761) | 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Tuesday, April 14: | [Green Lunch Series: Implementing Zero Waste Day to Day](#) | Athens Public Library (30 Home St. Athens 45701) | 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM



Regional & Partner Updates

FREE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT AGROFORESTRY AND AQUATIC HABITAT



Rural Action is providing free site visits and technical assistance to landowners in 44 Ohio counties to advise on Agroforestry and Wildlife habitat practices such as Reforestation, Forest Farming, and Silvopasture through Rural Action's Sustainable Forestry and Watersheds programs. The shared effort from Rural Action, US Forest Service, and NRCS aims to help landowners develop plans and access potential funding for the implementation of Agroforestry practices, Sustainable Forest Management, and Water

Quality Protection. [Read the full story](#) to find more information, including an intake survey for interested landowners.

SPEAKING FOR THE TREES IN AEP OHIO'S RATE CASE



Southeast Ohio Regional Director Molly Jo Stanley submitted [written testimony](#) and appeared as a witness in AEP Ohio's rate case before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, emphasizing the need for smarter vegetation management. Over the next three years, AEP Ohio wants to charge customers \$380 million to reduce Trees and Plants near power lines—while current practices employ heavy herbicide application, harm nesting Birds and Pollinators, remove mature Trees that provide crucial canopy cover and ecological benefits in urban neighborhoods, and proliferate invasive plant species while perpetuating costly maintenance cycles. Jo elevated concerns from landowners, businesses, and environmental advocates—bringing directly impacted voices into the decision-making process. This testimony is part of OEC's ongoing efforts to [oppose the rate case](#) and advance affordable, environmentally responsible energy.

GROWING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY FOOD FORESTS

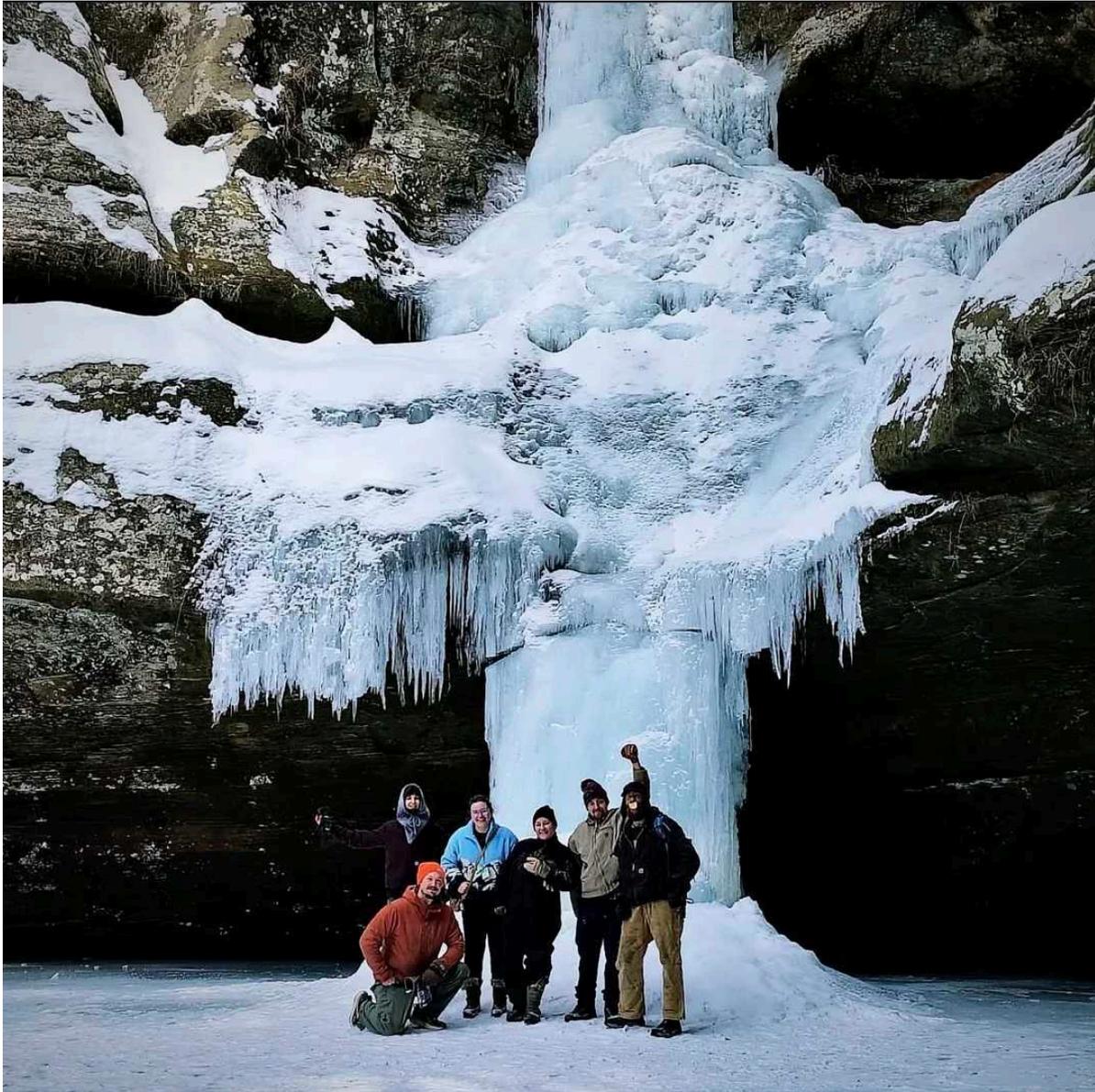


Photo caption: 2026 Apprenticeship Team visits Ash Cave (photo credit Badger Johnson)

[Rising Appalachia's](#) 2026 Community Forest Apprenticeship Program, funded through the Great Lakes Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program, launched this month. This program builds upon the successful 2024 [Ecology Apprenticeship Program](#). The Community Apprenticeship Program is a 12-month paid workforce development program in which individuals gain valuable skills in Forestry, Ecology, Natural Building, and entrepreneurship, while contributing to long-lasting community benefits and regenerative economics. This year's apprenticeship will include planting a 10-acre Community Food Forest and building a community pavilion from local materials.

REVITALIZING TABLERTOWN



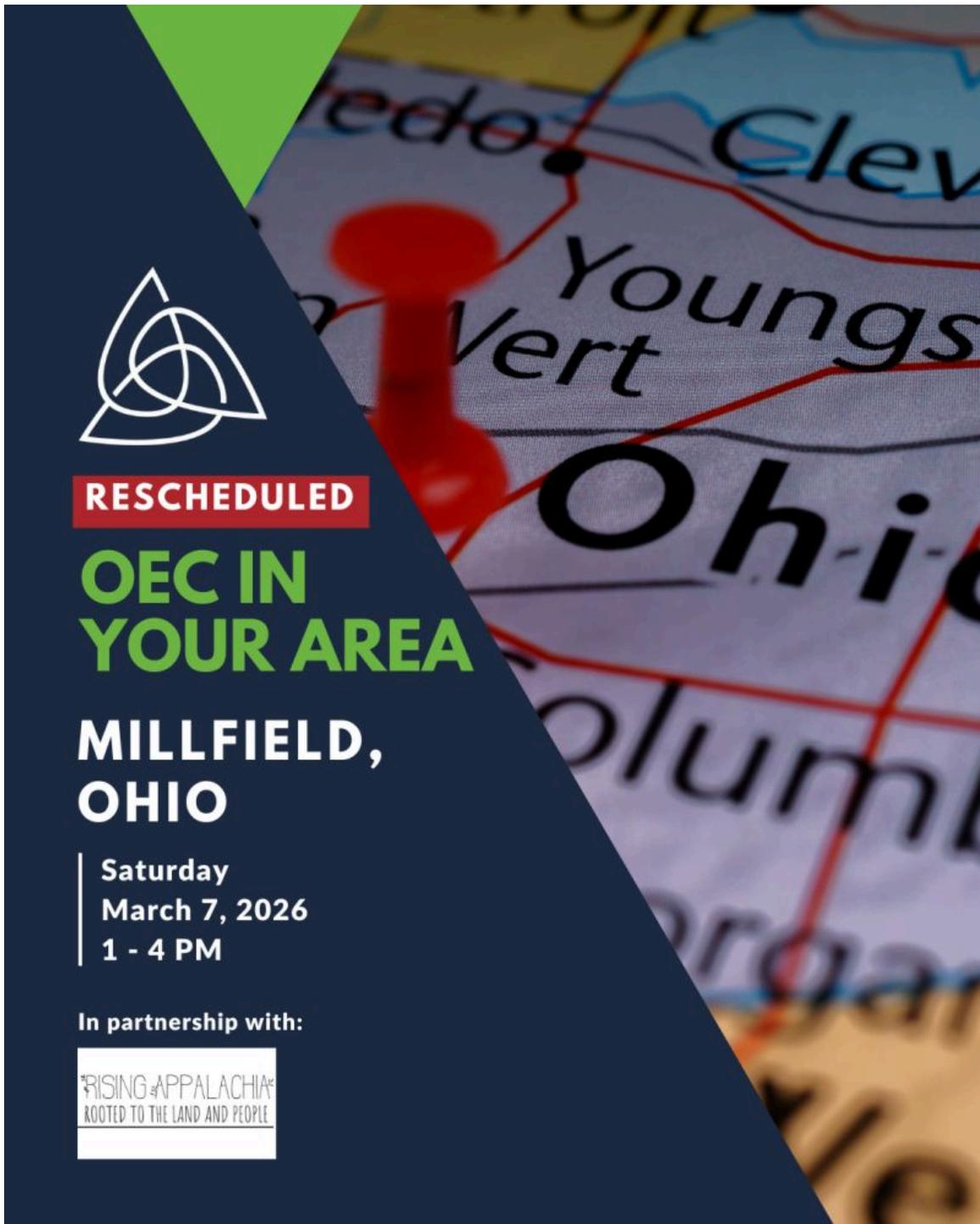
Photo caption: David Butcher stands in Tablertown cemetery (photo credit Ben Wirtz Siegel)

Thanks to David Butcher's enduring effort, [Tablertown and the People of Color Museum](#) will receive an infusion of approximately \$1 million to address legacy environmental pollution—more than a century of coal residue, lime slag, and mine runoff—impacting the land and Federal Creek. Along with the construction of a new facility for the Tablertown People of Color Museum, plans include providing recreational access to Federal Creek for kayaking and fishing, community gathering spaces, and a water tap for residents who currently drive 20 miles to Chesterfield or Tupper Plains to fill containers with water safe for drinking. [Read more here](#)

BUCKEYE TRAIL CLOSER TO BECOMING A NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL!

In June of 2025, the [OEC Action Fund testified](#) before the House Natural Resources Committee on HCR 13, which called on Congress to designate the Buckeye Trail as a National Scenic Trail. On February 11, the legislation [unanimously passed the Senate](#), concurring with the House. Congratulations to everyone who worked tirelessly on this effort to recognize and uplift the importance of our shared state treasure! Efforts now shift to the federal government, where the Executive and Legislative branches have the authority to designate the Buckeye Trail as a National Scenic Trail. To stay informed of ways to continue supporting this effort, follow the [Buckeye Trail Association](#).

OEC IN YOUR AREA





RESCHEDULED

OEC IN YOUR AREA

MILLFIELD, OHIO

Saturday
March 7, 2026
1 - 4 PM

In partnership with:



We hope you can join the OEC and Rising Appalachia for our first OEC In Your Area Event. This family-friendly event will feature a presentation on the Sugar Creek Community Forest at 1:00 pm, followed by walking the Land and practicing Winter Tree identification at 2:15 pm. [Learn more and register](#)

OEC Updates

2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding Repealed

The Trump Administration repealed the [2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding](#). This critical finding affirmed that carbon dioxide and other air pollutants endanger public health, and was a strong scientific basis for legal action. This repeal abandons science in favor of polluters, and its consequences will be felt in Ohio, across the nation, and globally. It will worsen the climate impacts Ohioans are already experiencing. We know the truth, we know our task, and we are on your side committed to fight for our shared values. Our work at the state level is critical to make real change in this moment. **Can you support our efforts with a special gift today?**

Donate

Law Center Analysis: Carbon Capture & Storage in HB 170

In March 2025, two Ohio representatives introduced House Bill 170 ([HB 170](#)), legislation designed to regulate carbon storage activities as a “matter of general statewide interest that requires uniform statewide regulation.” A laudable mission statement. But would the program, as currently designed, be protective of human health and the environment? The OEC Law Center Analysis provides our thoughts on HB 170, especially the policies in the bill we view may miss the mark for protecting the health and environment of Ohioans. Before lawmakers pass any legislation regulating carbon storage, these issues must, at minimum, be addressed. [Read the analysis.](#)

Upcoming OEC Events

We have a variety of exciting events happening all the time, so we encourage you to keep up to date with our [events page](#).

March 18 | [Action Briefings](#) | 12 PM-1 PM | Virtual

May 9 | [2026 Green Gala](#) | Columbus Zoo Africa Events Center | Tickets Coming Soon!



{{Disclaimer}}

Ohio Environmental Council
556 E Town St, Columbus, OH 43215

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